

# Council minutes

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Arlington, Massachusetts

9 March 2009

**Council Members Present:** Airin Cherian, Vicar Judy Converse, Beverly Dougherty, Pastor Ross Goodman, Sergia Hay, Jen Nahn, Mark Olson, Dana Ramish, Cindy Reuter, Alison Roberts, Brian Sniffen.

**Absent:** Darcie Sunnerberg, Marilyn Waehler.

## Gathering

A quorum is gathered and we come together in God's name at 7:30 PM. A candle is lit to remind us that Christ is present with us as we meet.

## Agenda

The agenda is accepted.

## Minutes

The minutes of February's council meeting are accepted as amended.

## Check-In

We respond to the Book of Faith Initiative's question about the community of the church and our role as individuals.

## Word

## Devotions

Dana Ramish then leads a devotion on 1 John 1:1-4 and the joy of spreading the Gospel, and the embarrassment of doing so in the modern world. Next month Alison Roberts will lead devotions.

We sing *Christ, the life of all the living* (339). The text has been modified to replace a line-ending "thee" with

"you." Changes propagate to rhyming lines, removing the correspondence of poetry with music.

Mark Olson leads us in prayer.

## Financial reports

### Financial secretary's report

We're behind about \$2500 in contributions for the year, and also coming to the end of MetroPCS' pre-payment from last year. They should now be paying regularly.

### Treasurer's report

We did not properly budget for Pastor Goodman's Social Security allowance. It was used to calculate fringe benefits paid to the Synod, but the sum itself was not then included in his budgeted compensation. We'll be making this up out of money budgeted for a Christian Education Director, since that role likely won't be filled until May.

We went negative in P2, Youth Ministry. The problem was mis-communication about the need for youth funds. The council allocated money for a trip to New Orleans in July, some of which was then spent for various other youth trips.

Ken Heyda is no longer reconciling the Church's accounts. Cindy, Mark, and Bev will ask the audit committee members to take up this task.

## Lilly Grant

Move to transfer \$2,241.74 from Q4 Lilly Grant to P3 Youth Ministry (\$1,037.37) and P7 Spiritual Nourishment (\$1,204.37) to close out the Lilly Grant account.

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

## Walk for affordable housing

The Social Ministry committee requests \$2000 from N7 to support the Eighth Annual Walk for Affordable Housing in Arlington. The walk will be held on April 26. It is run by the Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA).

A \$2000 donation puts St. Paul at the “Supporter” level and will include the following:

A “Company logo” on items distributed to Walk participants and on a banner of sponsors displayed at the event. A “Company name” will appear on HCA Walk brochures and flyers and in the Walk sponsor section of HCA’s 2009 newsletter.

The committee notes that they prefer to provide quiet support and ministry, but the inclusion of St. Paul on the Walk materials will hopefully satisfy the requests they continue to hear that Social Ministry be more public about the support provided by St. Paul.

A bit of background on HCA:

Since 1986 HCA has helped hundreds of low-income residents live affordable in our community. This year, HCA is pleased to announce that they will purchase and rehab ten additional apartments in Arlington.

In addition to owning and operating what will be 58 affordable apartments, HCA also administers Arlington’s Homelessness Prevention Fund that assists residents with grants for back rent, security deposits and moving costs to prevent homelessness in our community.

In 2008 the Walk for Affordable Housing raised over \$30,000.

More information on HCA is available at <http://www.housingcorporarlington.org/>.

Move for St. Paul to contribute \$2000 from N7 to support the 8th Annual Walk for Affordable Housing in Arlington.

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

## Braille and Large Print Ministry

Move for St. Paul to adopt the **Resolution on support for program to make ELCA materials available in Braille and large print.**

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

## Lease of parsonage and church offices to Lutheran Social Services

The lease will begin on 1 April. LSS is now asking to rent Hillside House, the large meeting room, the Intern office, and the meditation room. As this squeezes us into rather less of the space we have available, it encourages us to more intensely use the rooms we keep. We’re considering better furnishings for the waiting area outside the offices, and for several of the classrooms. To compensate the Korean congregation for the space we’re taking from them we’ll enlarge the common room into the Fellowship Hall.

Improvements and changes we need to make to accept LSS as a tenant:

- At Hillside House: refinish cabinets, new counter tops, refinish first floor at estimated cost of \$5500;
- Remodel wall in the fellowship hall (approximately twenty feet long, eleven feet high, with doors and an extra internal wall);
- New furniture for lobby area by offices on second floor and furniture for youth and class rooms at estimate of \$4000.

We’ve also talked about the acoustics of the Fellowship Hall. Alison suggests doing that work at the same time as the wall in that Hall.

Beverly moves to create a dedicated account to hold \$500 of LSS’s rent for Hillside House per month to cover the costs of fixing up the house to LSS specifications.

MOVED, SECONDED, WITHDRAWN.

Thrivent funds may help offset some of these repair and upkeep costs. Perhaps we can put a plaque for some of the recently departed members of the congregation, designating the new furnishings (and the rooms they’re in) as a memorial.

**Resolution on support for program to make ELCA materials available in Braille and large print**

WHEREAS the Good News is a life-giving gift of God, meant to be shared freely with everyone, like sunlight or oxygen; and

WHEREAS Jesus commissions his followers to gather disciples everywhere, and the ELCA seeks to follow this call by welcoming diversity in our communities of faith and also by continuing a healthy tradition of self-examination and change when we discover bias in our words or actions; and

WHEREAS in John 9:3, Jesus specifically affirms God's calling for people who are blind, saying, "[this man] was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him," and the man in the story goes on to demonstrate this by courageously witnessing to Christ, just as many people with low vision or blindness continue to do today; and

WHEREAS people who have low vision or blindness are involved in an ongoing struggle for basic civil rights like access to voting and education, and the ELCA should support this struggle as part of our commitment to promoting justice for all God's children; and

WHEREAS people with low vision and blindness are already active as worshipers and leaders in ELCA congregations and seminaries; and

WHEREAS promoting the availability of Braille and large-print resources would encourage growth in our church membership; and

WHEREAS modern technology makes production and distribution of large-print and Braille materials easier than ever before; and centralizing these functions would allow congregations across the ELCA to have more convenient and less expensive access to such materials; and

WHEREAS the formation of the ELCA in 1988 included an organization called the ELCA Braille & Tape Service, later renamed ELCA Braille & Tape Ministry, which became inactive in 2004; and

WHEREAS since 2004 the ELCA has promoted worship and educational resources (ELW, Book of Faith resources, social statements, Christian education materials, etc.) that are available only in small-size print, thus marginalizing children and adults who read Braille or large print; and

WHEREAS the resurrection of a comprehensive program to provide Braille and large-print resources to ELCA congregations would benefit and uplift the entire body of Christ; be it therefore

RESOLVED that St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church calls on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to provide financial and other support for the creation of a new full-time program to make our resources readily available in Braille and large print.

### **Possible new contract with AT&T**

The lift in the parking lot is from AT&T, who are working on a new cross with larger, more modern antennas and 3G wireless. They've offered \$1000 per month.

Clearwire has also asked about Wi-Max antennas on the roof.

### **Pennies ministry**

Helena Ritzkowski went to see a talk by Greg Mortinson, the author of recent Congregational read *Three Cups of Tea*. His daughter has a charity called Pennies For Peace (<http://penniesforpeace.org/>). Helena asks for Council permission to collect pennies for the Pennies For Peace charity on Church property. We encourage Helena to present this to the Social Ministry committee.

The council supports Helena Ritzkowski's request to run the Pennies for Peace fundraiser for six weeks at the church.

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

### **Coffee hour**

Cindy brings a congregational concern that there's a noted asymmetry in the coffee hour contributions. Mark will talk to Diane about putting some of the new folks onto the roster, particularly on teams that could use more help.

### **Personnel committee report**

We have three active searches right now: Director of Christian Education, Minister of Music, and Attendant of Nursery. Vicar Converse and Sergia will be at a career fair at Harvard Divinity School this month.

Colleen Henry's appointment as interim minister of music expires a few days after Easter.

Our sexton may be leaving in October.

### **Book of Faith initiative**

Six groups are meeting regularly. Vicar Converse reports that the program's going wonderfully.

### **Creating a safe community**

The Christian Education committee has sent a suggested policy document to the council. This document was adapted from a large Lutheran church in California. There are many questions and comments, so the issue is held til next meeting.

Beverly informs us that we're not in compliance with our insurance without a policy on some matter related to this. The insurance policy's requirement is not directly available.

Judy will follow this up with Eric Sunnerberg, and return next month with compiled questions and notes.

### **New purchase orders**

There are new purchase order forms available in the copy machine room. Please do not use old purchase orders. The new ones have been modified to fit with this year's budget.

### **Tellers and the computer**

Tellers, please remember not to shut down the computer after you have finished counting on Sunday. It must be on to be used remotely by the Treasurer.

### **Reports of the clergy**

Vicar Converse is halfway through her internship. She's enjoying her time with this community and will find it very hard to leave in six months.

Pastor Goodman is feeling some of the stresses of having only one pastor. He's most nervous about leaving town for even a few days and failing to minister to the families of the congregation. Over the next years we should expect that some Sunday services will have our intern and a local pastor presiding. One will be coming next week, as he goes to spend some time caring for his father.

Alison Roberts leads us in prayer.

## **Meal**

Pastor Goodman gathers us in prayer and leads communion at 10:00PM.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Sniffen

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Next regular council meeting: 9 April 2009 at 7:30 PM.